



Hearing Modernization and docs.house.gov

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#LDTc15

Committee on House Administration

- CHA realized that the current process for compiling Hearing Reports was more arduous and expensive than necessary.
- Reynold Schweickhardt of CHA established the Hearing Modernization Project and hired DotGov Communications to:
 - implement a faster, cheaper, and more efficient process,
 - while creating a more reader and tech friendly version of Hearing Reports.
- Thanks to Chairman Miller and her staff for undertaking this important effort and for their invaluable assistance with the project.

<https://cha.house.gov>



CHA Modernization Effort Plan

1. Research current systems and documents
2. Research alternative inexpensive, simple, streamlined process for creating compiled documents
3. Avoid steep learning curve or highly technical approaches
4. Improve the final product as feasible
 - a. Faster to print
 - b. More auto checks on accuracy
 - c. Easier to use document



What Makes a Committee Hearing Report Different

The report is a compilation document with multiple document suppliers from across the world.

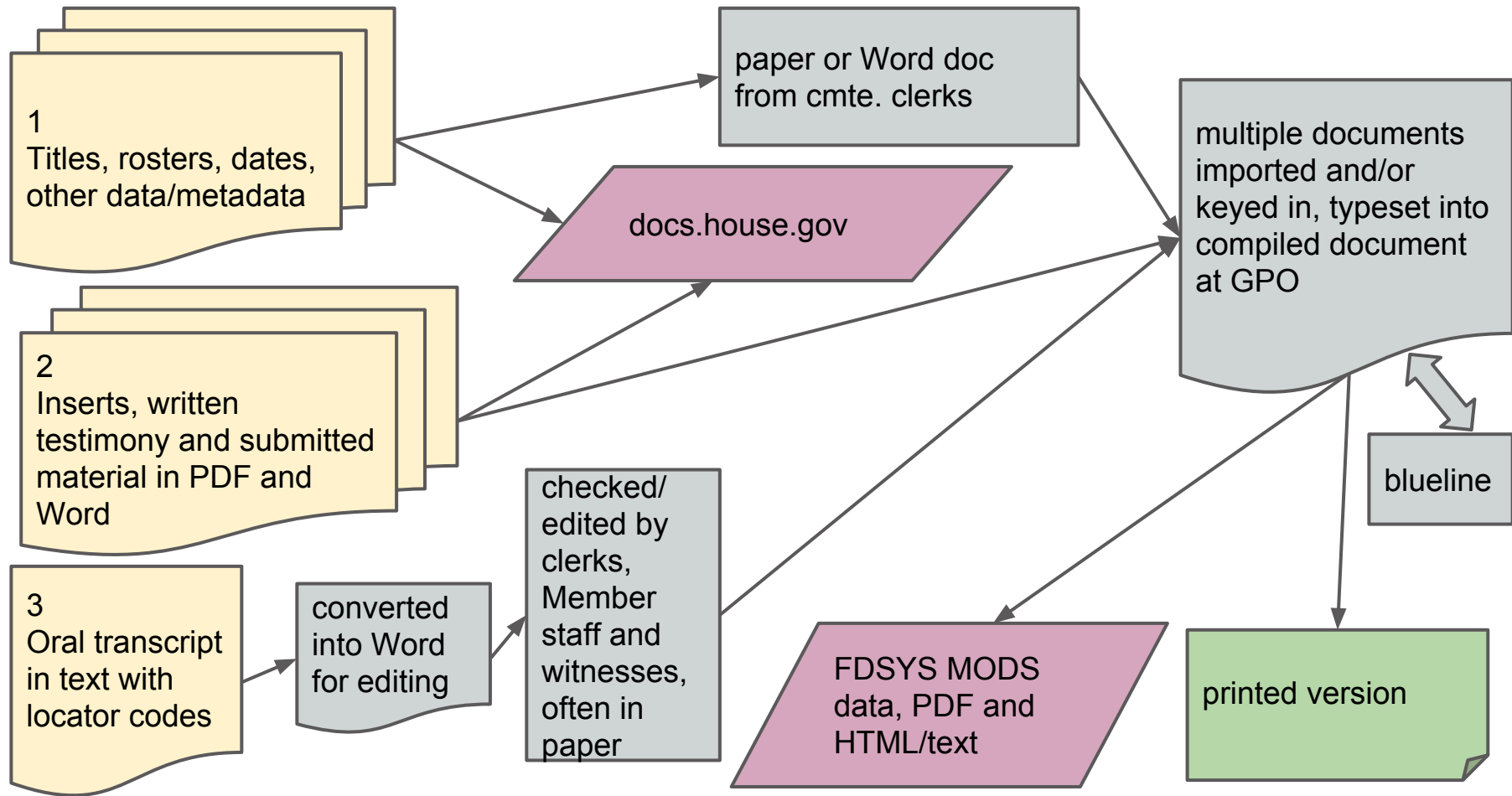
- Official data
- Official Reporter's oral transcript
- Edited material
- Documents from disparate witnesses



Current Process

- Schedule a hearing
- Invite the witnesses
- Upload various information and documents to docs.house.gov
- Receive and make some edits to the transcript
- Compile large folder often with handwritten notes
- Get back blueline from GPO
- Have report printed





Issues Raised During the Research

- Transcript is converted from text document with “codes” to Word for editing, then edited in Word, then into a printout with hand markings, then typeset for PDF, then converted to text for processing
- Incoming documents are in PDF or Word, sometimes without text, and are inserted into the transcript, creating a long, interspersed document and often two conflicting page numbers on a page. Much of the process was paperbound.
- No XML standards used at any point in the creation.
- However, XML metadata created from documents and inputting:
 - docs.house.gov keeps XML-based documentation
 - MODS data created by GPO by extracting metadata from plain text-based version of report



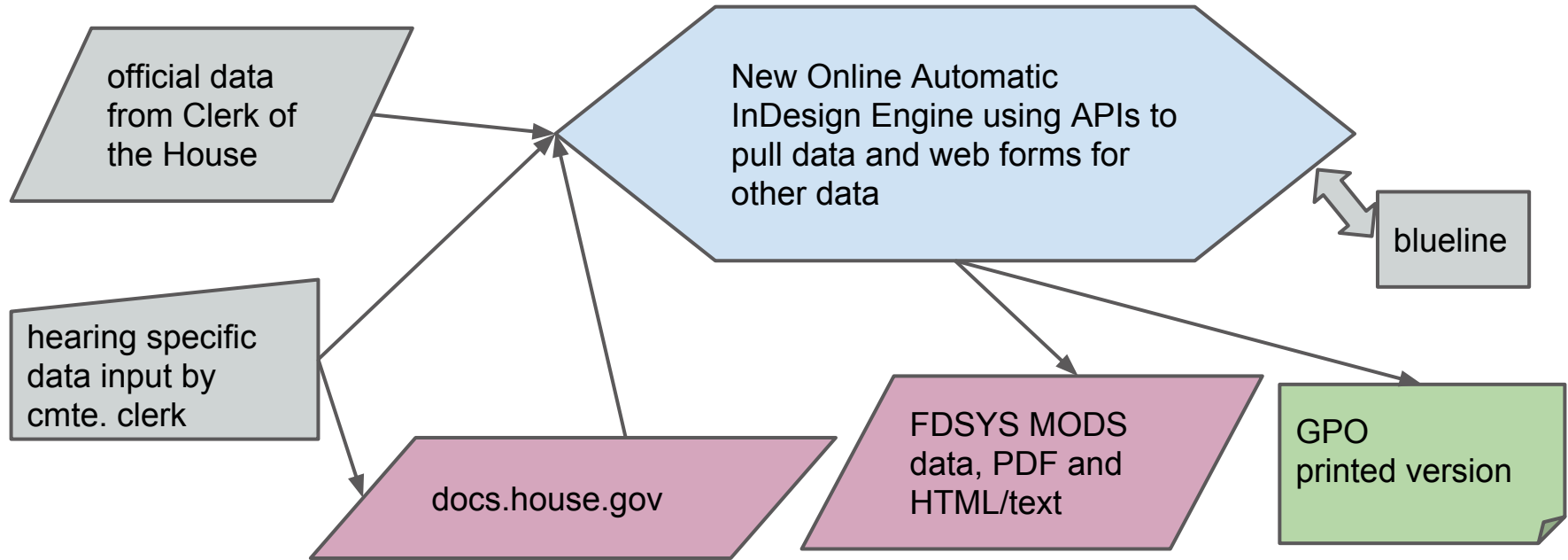
Creating a New Standard for Committee Reports That Will Foster Automation

- In first phase, create draft versions that will expose all of the potential roadblocks, new interface, opportunities for streamlining and improving the process and work product
- Work with the Clerk of the House to establish new report standards
- Work with clerks from various committees to learn of variations in process and work product
- Work with Official Reporters to learn about the official transcripts
- How to sidestep Word Doc version and get process-friendlier text with locator code
- Work with GPO to learn
 - How to create printable versions
 - How to create GPO-usable versions for extracting MODS



Modernizing Official Data Process

Titles, rosters, dates, other data/metadata



Modernizing Official Data Process

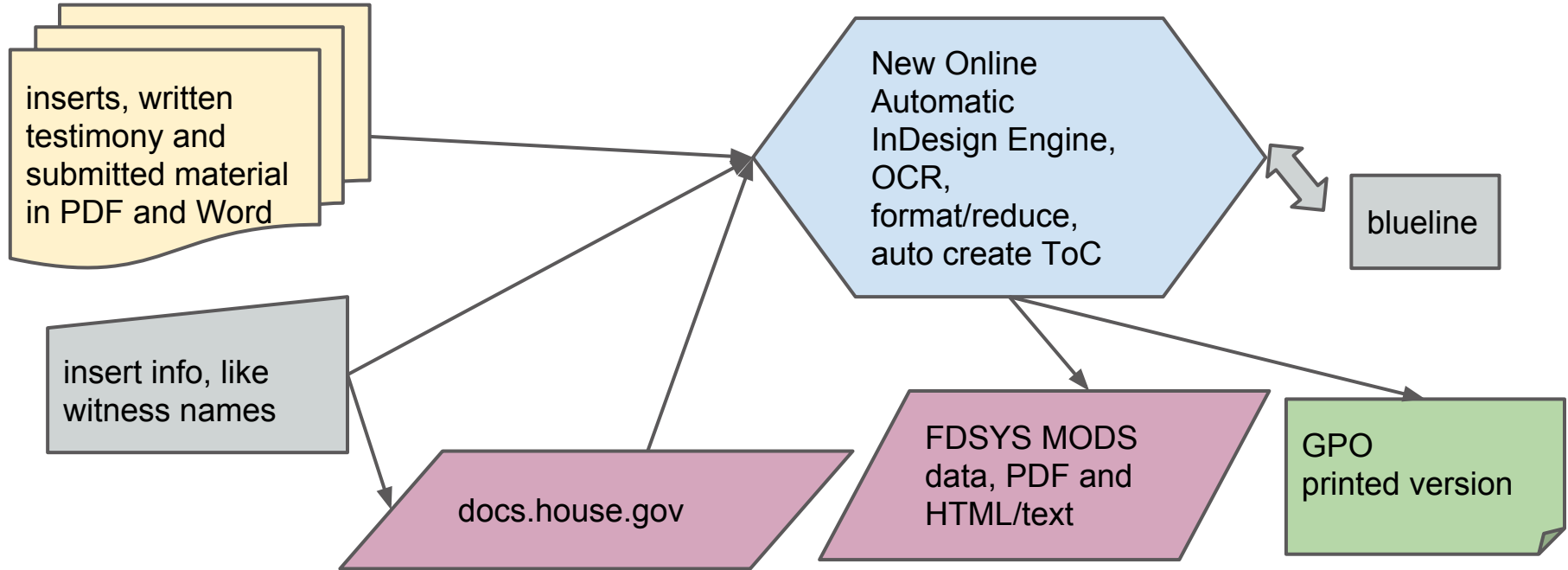
current: one-off use of data

new: standardized, time stamped, official source with better integration into document and post-processing metadata extraction



Modernizing Submitted Materials Process

Inserts, written testimony and submitted material in PDF and Word



Modernizing Submitted Materials Process

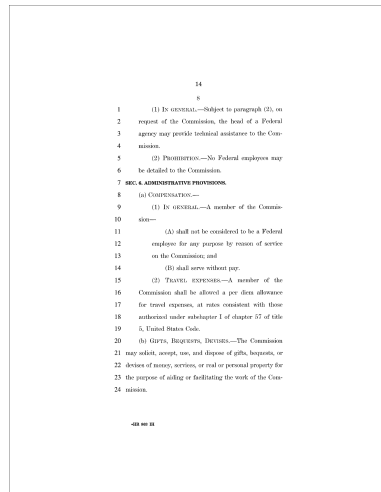
Inserts, written testimony and submitted material in PDF and Word

Current:

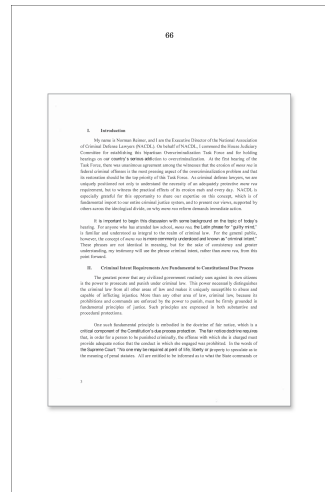
Handset, often with 2 page numbers on same page and no definition by formats or separation from the oral transcript

New:

Auto-typeset, with clear separation from oral transcript by formatting and putting them in an appendix. Also, a link when available to original version of electronic document on docs.house.gov for increased legibility and downloading as a unique document.



Current

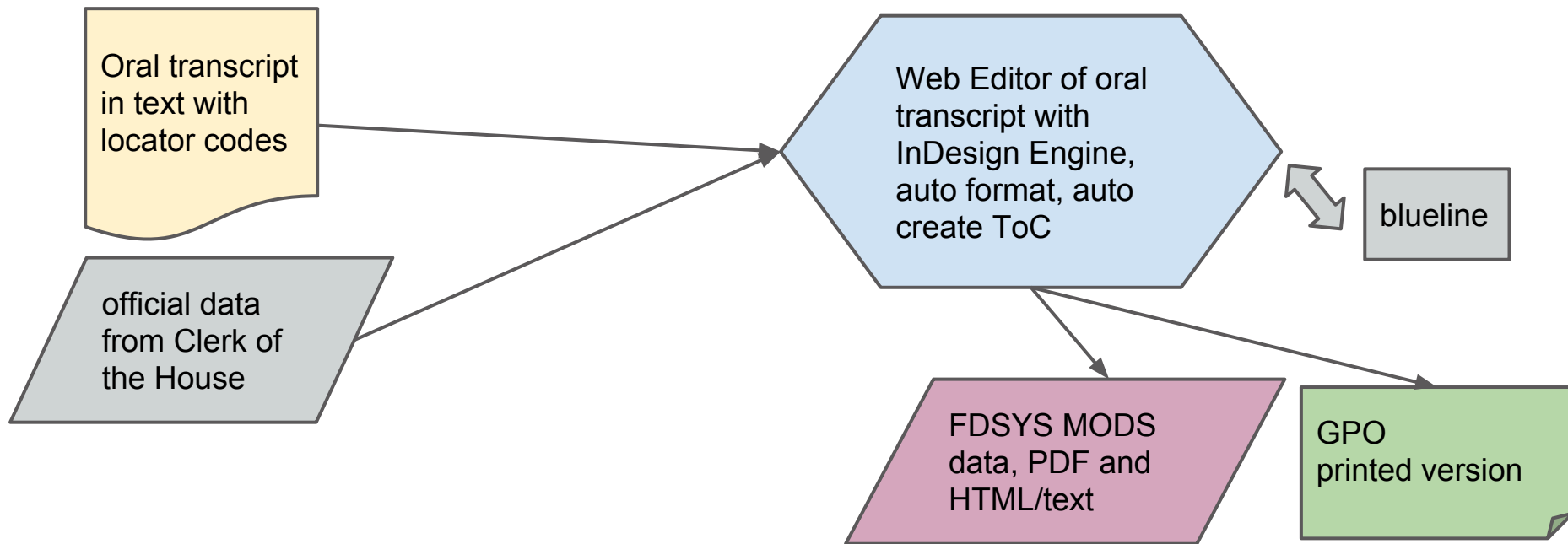


New



Modernizing Transcript Process

Oral transcript in text with locator codes



Modernizing Transcript Process

Current:

Takes structured document (ASCII with locator codes) and turns into unstructured Word document for editing purpose.

New:

Take structured document and preserve structure. Allow easy editing in online web editor while maintaining structure. Easier to create links to speakers for an index. Also keep the transcript in one piece with links to submitted material.



Examples of New Version

MEMBERS' DAY HEARING ON PROPOSED RULES CHANGES FOR THE 114TH CONGRESS

BEFORE THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, SUBCOMMITTEE ON RULES AND ORGANIZATION OF THE HOUSE, COMMITTEE ON RULES

Held in Washington, D.C., Wednesday, September 17, 2014



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MEMBERS' DAY HEARING ON PROPOSED RULES CHANGES FOR THE 114TH CONGRESS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2014

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON RULES AND ORGANIZATION OF THE HOUSE,
COMMITTEE ON RULES

Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 11:02 a.m., in Room H-313, The Capitol, Hon. Richard B. Nugent (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Nugent, Sessions, Bishop, Webster, McGovern, and Polis.

MR. NUGENT. Let's call this to order. The subcommittee will come to order. Good morning, and thank you for coming to our subcommittee hearing. I would like to thank my friend and Ranking Member McGovern for support for this hearing.

Looks like the door is having little issues over there.

Also like to recognize all the staff, their hard work in putting this together, because, obviously, everything we do around here, if it wasn't for staff, would not get done.

Today the Subcommittee on Rules and Organization of the House meets for a Members' Day hearing on proposed changes to the standing rules of the 114th Congress. Under Article I, Section 5 of the Constitution, each house of Congress is empowered to determine the rules of its proceedings; therefore, at the beginning of each Congress, the House adopts a rules package to govern the new Congress.

This hearing will provide Members, both Republican and Democrat, an opportunity to offer ideas on what rules package should look like in this next upcoming Congress. It will allow Members a forum to testify about their various proposals, and it marks the first step in an inclusive and collaborative approach and process in determining the rules of the House for the next Congress.

Because the rules package is one of the first votes Members will take

1

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STATEMENT OF THE HON. DAVID W. JOLLY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

<https://docs.house.gov/>



Opportunities for Further Modernization

- MODS Github project by GPO (<https://github.com/usgpo>)
- XML/HTML version of Oral Transcript
- Transcript to Video integration
- Paged Media for whole document (mobile, screen and print ready)
- Witness database
- Links and citations to:
 - Legislation
 - Member web sites
 - Witness info across multiple hearings
- Witness and Member web submissions in HTML5/XML format



About This Document

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LEGISLATIVE DATA AND
TRANSPARENCY CONFERENCE

